



jojohn

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Stephen Cochran, AICP, Case Manager
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: April 16, 2013

SUBJECT: BZA Case No.18538– 400 6th Street, SW -- Square 494, Lot 31

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING (OP) RECOMMENDATION

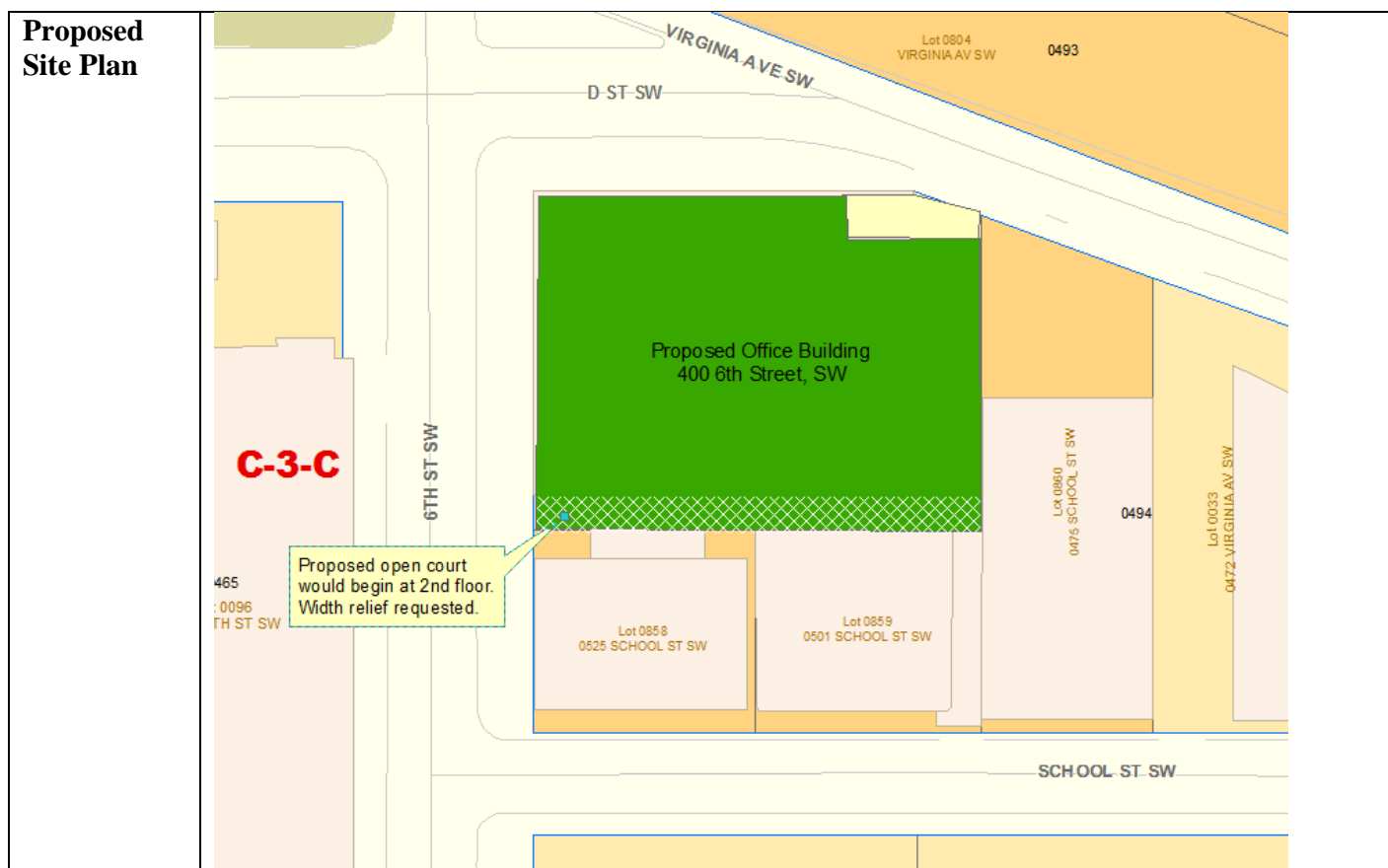
OP recommends the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) **approve** the following requested area variance relief for a proposed new office building at 400 6th Street, S.W.:

Section	Topic	Permitted /Required	Existing	Proposed	Relief
776.1	Court Width	28.54 ft.	n/a: current bldg.. to be demolished	22.17 ft	-6.37 ft.; -22.3 %

II. AREA, SITE DESCRIPTION, AND PROPOSAL

Applicant: TC MidAtlantic Development IV, Inc. on behalf of PNC Realty Investors		Legal Description: Square 494, Lot 31	
Address: 400 6th Street, SW		Ward: 6	ANC: 6D
Zoning: C-3-C, TDR Receiving Zone		Historic Preservation: n/a	
Lot Features	The 36,317 square foot, flat, five-sided lot is at the southeast corner of 6 th and D Streets, S.E., adjacent to Virginia Avenue and the CSX railroad mainline. A lot in a C-3-C TDR receiving zone is permitted a 130 foot high, 10.0 FAR building if it fronts on a street over 110 feet wide.		
Adjacent Properties	High Density office buildings of 8 to 11 stories		
Neighborhood Character	This area of southwest Washington is occupied primarily by federally owned or leased offices. The government is planning to re-position some of its properties and will be seeking new office space or “swing-space” to enable it to move out of some of its existing buildings.		
Proposal	<p>The 361,935 sf office building would rise 130 feet and have an FAR of 10.0. There would be 242 zoning-compliant below-grade parking spaces accessed from Virginia Avenue, S.W. Loading would be accessed from 6th Street, S.W.</p> <p>The building’s first floor would occupy its entire site, with the exception of a zoning-compliant courtyard on Virginia Avenue, which would serve as the structure’s principal pedestrian entrance. On the full length of the south side, where neither a yard nor court is required, the applicant wishes to construct an open court from the 2nd floor up, to provide additional light for the offices, and avoid blocking at-risk windows in the two buildings to the south. The 22.17 foot court width would be zoning compliant for the first 10 floors, but 6.37 feet narrower than the 28.54 feet required by § 776.1 for floors 11 and 12.</p>		





III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and REQUESTED RELIEF

Item	Reg.	Existing	Required / Permitted	Proposed ¹	Relief
Lot Area	none	36,317 sf	n/a	Same	conforms
Lot Width	none	166' x 220'	None	150 ft.	conforms
Lot Occ.	772.1	75%	100%	95%	conforms
FAR	771.2	0.8	10.0, TDR; 361,835 SF	10.0	conforms
Height	1709.21	5 stories	130 ft. in TDR receiving zone on street at least 110 ft. wide	130 ft.	conforms
Roof Structure	411.5	0	1 enclosure; Equal height walls ≤ 18.5'; 1:1 setback; ≤ 0.37 FAR		
Parking	2101.1	167	201	242	conforms
Loading	2202.1	2 @ 360 sf each	3 @ 360 sf 1 @ 200 sf	3 @ 360 sf 1 @ 200 sf	conforms
Rear Yard	774		27.08 ft.	27.08 ft.	conforms
Side Yard	775.5	n/a	Not required	n/a	n/a
Open Ct. Width	776.1	13.71 ft. -bldg. to be demolished	28.54 ft.	22.17 ft.	- 6.37 ft. -22.3 %

¹ Information supplied by applicant

IV. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

A. §§ 776.1 Open Court Width Requirements

1. Exceptional Condition or Situation
2. Resulting in a Practical Difficulty if Relief is Not Granted

The applicant has demonstrated that there are exceptional conditions that would result in a practical difficulty if the requested relief were not granted for the width of the open court at floors 11 and 12 of the proposed building.

The two office buildings to the south of the applicant's site are built to their northern property lines and have a full array of at-risk windows. The applicant's property generally measures 166 feet from north to south and 186 feet from east to west. The applicant states that these distances make it preferable for a building to provide windows on at least three sides. Without the provision of a court on the south side, which is not required by zoning, the light available to the proposed building and the two existing buildings to the south would be significantly diminished.

Secure buildings for federal office space are the primary market for developments in this part of southwest Washington. The applicant demonstrates that providing the full 28.54 feet of court width required by § 776.1 would pose a practical difficulty for meeting federal office building standards for blast-resistant facades and for structural systems that minimize the potential of a progressive collapse of the building's primary structural components.

At the proposed width, the southern perimeter wall columns on floors 1 – 12 would align with the below-grade columns, but the upper two floors would require an additional 6.37 foot setback to meet zoning requirements. The applicants states that providing that setback for the top two floors would require the use of sloped columns or transfer beams on the top five floors. The applicant presents information on pages 5 and 6 of its April 9, 2013 pre-hearing statements about why such a structural system would impede interior layouts, be more costly for meeting federal standards, result in less efficient HVAC and lighting systems, and lead to the loss of usable floor space.

3. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good or Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

The applicant states that the requested 6.37 feet of relief from the open court width requirements at the 11th and 12th floors would enable the provision of an optional open court along the entire 183 foot length of the building's southern face. This would enable the maintenance of northern light for the properties to the south while providing better light for the occupants of the proposed new building. The applicant also notes while it is asking for a width reduction on the south side of the building, on the northeast corner it is voluntarily providing additional space for public use at Virginia Avenue, S.W. and D Street, S.W., where there is now only 6 feet between the property line and the curb. The applicant would pull the new building back approximately twenty feet for its full-height to enable an adequate pedestrian path near the proposed building entrance. OP calculates this open area could accommodate approximately 14,500 square feet of development in a twelve story building.

OP is aware of no substantial harm the requested relief would impose on the public good or the zoning regulations.

V. ADDITIONAL DISTRICT AGENCY COMMENTS

The property is neither in a historic district nor determined eligible for listing.

After meeting with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) the applicant has located its utility vaults on private property. DDOT is continuing to work with the applicant on refinements to truck circulation, but has expressed no concerns about the requested zoning relief.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

ANC 6D voted unanimously to support the application at its regularly noticed meeting on April 8, 2013.

OP was aware of no other letters of support or opposition when this report was completed on April 10, 2013.